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## Bloomberg, Rendell Want More Federal Infrastructure Funding

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By [Michelle Kaske](#)

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Pennsylvania Gov. Edward Rendell yesterday pushed their agenda for more federal financing of public infrastructure and called for a town hall meeting on the issue with presumptive presidential nominees John McCain and Barack Obama.

Bloomberg and Rendell addressed the National Conference of State Legislatures at its 2008 Legislative Summit in New Orleans, urging more state and local officials to join the Building America's Future Coalition. The group seeks to increase federal investment in roads, bridges, tunnels, and mass transit systems throughout the U.S. to help state and local governments address growing infrastructure costs. Bloomberg and Rendell chair the coalition, along with California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"By standing with us today, these men and women are telling the next president and the next Congress that infrastructure investment is key to our economic recovery; key to the sustainability of our planet; and key to the quality of life and the safety of our citizens," Bloomberg said in a press release. "We could not be prouder than to have their support as we prepare to take our case to Washington in the coming months and years."

At the conference, Rendell and Bloomberg released the coalition's statement of principles, which includes a national agenda for infrastructure policy that incorporates safety, economic growth, global competitiveness, and environmental stability; increased federal funding; greater levels of accountability for project budgets and time lines; and urgency in Washington.

"The new administration should make developing a new national infrastructure policy a top priority and immediately call on Congress and the federal agencies to implement this policy," according to the statement of principles.

According to the coalition, state and local governments provide three of every four dollars currently being spent on infrastructure throughout the U.S. In addition, a 2005 American Society of Civil Engineers report pegged infrastructure funding needs at \$1.6 trillion over a five-year period. Meanwhile, funding levels as a share of all federal expenditures are exactly the same as they were more than twenty years ago, according to the coalition's Web site.

"In the past 20 years, state and local governments across the country have been picking up more of the tab to build, maintain and expand the facilities and infrastructure on which people rely," Rendell said in a press release. "If America is to continue competing in the global economic marketplace, we need an efficient and sound infrastructure; we need the commitment of greater federal resources to help counties and states meet these pressing needs."

Rendell last week began his tenure as president of the National Governors Association, and in his acceptance speech said that infrastructure finance will be his core goal at the NGA.

In its effort to gain support from state and local governments, the Coalition has also spoken before the

NGA, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and the National Association of County Officials.

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